Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 02593 162209Z
ACTION SS-25

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----------042826 162219Z /73
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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
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S E C R E T PANAMA 2593

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EXDIS

FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER FROM AMBASSADOR JORDEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PN
SUBJECT: LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION

REF: STATE 097582

1. THIS RESPONDS TO YOUR REQUEST FOR ASSESSMENT OF THE LIKELY PANAMANIAN REACTION TO THE LATEST FORMULA FOR A LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION TO MEET THE OBJECTIONS POSED TO THE DECONCINI RESERVATION. I AM ASSUMING TORRIJOS AND HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISERS HAVE BEEN CONSULTED AND HAVE GIVEN THEIR APPROVAL TO THIS FORMULA. I KNOW AMBASSADOR LEWIS HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE GENERAL AND HIS COLLEAGUES HERE AND AM SURE HE WOULD NOT HAVE INDICATED AGREEMENT TO THIS PROPOSAL WITHOUT THEIR OK.

2. IF THAT IS TRUE, IT MEANS THAT TORRIJOS AND HIS ADVISERS BELIEVE THEY CAN BRING ALONG A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF PUBLIC OPINION HERE. I BELIEVE THEY ARE RIGHT. SO LONG AS THE REPUDIATION OF INTERVENTION IS EXPLICIT AND THE PLEDGE OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN PANAMA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS OR WITH ITS POLITICAL INDEPENDENCE IS SPELLED OUT, I THINK MAJOR SEGMENTS OF PANAMA'S BUSINESS AND

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PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY WILL GO ALONG. THERE WILL BE HOLDOUTS, OF COURSE. MANY OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN USING TREATY MATTERS AS A WEAPON WITH WHICH TO ATTACK THE TORRIJOS REGIME WILL NOT ABANDON THEIR EFFORTS. THAT INCLUDES THE INDEPENDENT LAWYERS, SOME IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY, INTELLECTUAL LEADERS AND POLITICAL THEORETICIANS AT THE UNIVERSITY, AND OTHERS. NOTHING, OBVIOUSLY, WILL REALLY PLACATE MUCH OF THE STUDENT BODY AT THE UNIVERSITY

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AND SOME OF THE HIGH SCHOOLS. THE VOCAL ELEMENTS IN THE LATTER
GROUPS DO NOT WANT A TREATY AT ALL. ANYTHING THAT MOVES US
TOWARD A RESOLUTION OF U.S.-PANAMANIAN DIFFERENCES IS ANATHEMA
TO THEM. BUT COUNTERING THIS, I FEEL CERTAIN THAT TORRIJOS WILL
BRING ALONG WITH HIM THE ENTIRE LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL GUARD.

3. IF TORRIJOS AND COMPANY HAVE, IN FACT, DECIDED TO ACCEPT
THIS COURSE, I THINK THEY CAN BE COUNTED ON TO ARGUE VOLUBLY
THAT NO NEW PLEBISCITE IS REQUIRED. THEY WILL INSIST THAT THE
NEW FORMULA PULLS THE TEETH OF DECONCINI AND THE PROPOSED
RESOLUTION IS IN THE FULL SPIRIT OF THE ORIGINAL TREATY AS
CLARIFIED BY THE CARTER-TORRIJOS UNDERSTANDING--AND THE RESULTING
"CLARIFICATIONS" OF ARTICLE IV AND VI.

4. ONE THING THAT WILL HELP GREATLY HERE--AS REGARDS POPULAR
RECEPTION--WILL BE THE LEGISLATIVE RECORD ON THIS MATTER AS IT
IS DEVELOPED TOMORROW AND TUESDAY ON THE SENATE FLOOR. I WOULD
HOPE THAT TREATY SUPPORTERS--AND OPPONENTS OF INTERVENTION--
WILL SPELL OUT THE SENATE'S INTENTIONS WITH EMPHASIS AND ELOQUENCE.
THIS SHOULD BE REINFORCED BY POSITIVE STATEMENTS BY THE EXECUTIVE.

5. ANOTHER APPROACH THAT WOULD HELP GREATLY WOULD BE SOME
EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR THE TREATIES--AND THE PROPOSED ADDITIONAL
LANGUAGE IN THE SENATE RESOLUTION OPPOSTING INTERVENTION--FROM KEY
LEADERS IN LATIN AMERICA. I AM THINKING OF MEN LIKE ANDRES PEREZ
OF VENEZUELA, LOPEZ MICHELSEN OF COLOMBIA AND ODUBER OF COSTA RICA.
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THE SOONER SOME SUCH EXPRESSIONS OF FAVORABLE ATTITUDE CAN BE ELICITED

FOR PUBLIC USE, THE BETTER POSITION TORRIJOS WILL BE IN TO BLUNT
LOCAL CRITICISM AND TO DISCOURAGE DEMONSTRATIONS.
JORDEN

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